

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage medium for the optical storage and retrieval of information, the storage medium comprising:

a substrate ~~(1), and~~  
an active layer ~~(2, 2', ...)~~ formed on said substrate for retention of data,  
~~the active layer (2, 2', ...) being provided~~ being formed in tracks on said substrate in with a pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions in each track,  
characterized in that the pre-determined pattern comprises a two-dimensional strip of bit positions in each track (14, 14', ...).

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The storage medium as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the substrate ~~(1)~~ is provided with the pre-determined pattern ~~(4)~~ of bit positions ~~(14, 14', ...)~~.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The storage medium as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the pre-determined pattern ~~(4)~~ comprises an at least partial quasi-hexagonal or quasi-square pattern.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The storage medium as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the scaled distance  ~~$d_{e1}$~~  <sup>$d_{e1}$</sup>  between centers of the bit positions ~~14, 14', ...~~ is less than 0.84, preferably less than 0.63.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The storage medium as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the scaled distance  ~~$d_{e1}$~~  <sup>$d_{e1}$</sup>  between the active layer at a first bit position and the active layer at an adjacent bit position is less than 0.42, preferably less than 0.3.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a storage medium for the optical storage and retrieval of information, the method comprising the following steps of:

providing a substrate (1) is provided with a pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...),  
forming an active layer (2, 2', ...) in substantially parallel tracks on said substrate for retention of data, said active layer only being is provided on the substrate substantially at the location of the bit positions (14, 14', ...) in the predetermined pattern in each track,  
characterized in that the pre-determined pattern comprises a two-dimensional strip of bit positions in each track.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the step of providing a substrate with a predetermined pattern of bit positions

~~comprises using a pressing tool is employed to generate the pre-~~  
~~determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...).~~

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ ~~The~~ method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that ~~said~~ ~~predetermined pattern of bit positions provided on the substrate~~ ~~comprises~~ a two-dimensional strip of bit positions ~~(14, 14', ...)~~ in the form of a spiral ~~is provided on the substrate.~~

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ ~~The~~ method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 7, wherein said method further ~~comprising~~ ~~comprises~~ the step of:  
.....providing a mirror layer ~~(16)~~ between the substrate and the active layer.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ ~~The~~ method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 7, wherein said method further ~~comprising~~ ~~comprises~~ the step of:  
.....providing a thermally insulating layer ~~(17)~~ between the active layer ~~(2, 2', ...)~~ at a first bit position ~~(-)~~ and the active layer at an adjacent bit position ~~(-)~~.

12. (Currently Amended) A record carrier having information written thereon, characterized in that the information is coded in an active layer ~~(2, 2', ...)~~ provided by a method of manufacturing as claimed in claim 7.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The record carrier as claimed in claim 12, characterized in that the record carrier is an optical disc.